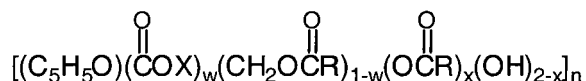


## IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-35 (Cancelled).

Claim 36 (Previously presented): A biodegradable, oxidized cellulose ester having the following general formula I or II:

I.



wherein:

X is selected from the group consisting of H, Na, K, Ca, NH<sub>4</sub>, and NEt<sub>3</sub>H;

whereby R is (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>COOH, where n is 2 to 4;

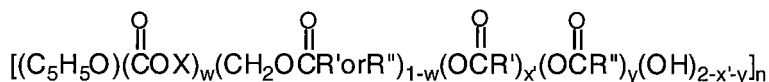
w is 0.1-1.0;

x is 0.1-2.0; and

n is 30-1500.

and

II.



wherein:

X is selected from the group consisting of H, Na, K, Ca, NH<sub>4</sub>, and NEt<sub>3</sub>H;

R' and R'' are each selected from the group consisting of: H; CF<sub>3</sub>; (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>, where n is from 0 to 18; (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>COOH, where n is from 1 to 8; CY=CZCOOH, where Y and Z are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, branched alkyl having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and from one to three *cis* or *trans* double bonds; branched alkenyl

having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and having from one to three *cis* or *trans* double bonds; CY-CH<sub>2</sub>, where Y is H, methyl, or phenyl; CH=CHY, where Y is C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>; CH=CYCOOH, where Y is H or CH<sub>3</sub>; (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>8</sub>CH=CH(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>8</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>; or C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>(2-6)</sub>(COOH)<sub>0-4</sub>, CH<sub>2</sub>CH(COOH)CH<sub>2</sub>-COOH;

w is 0.1-1.0;

x' is 0.1-1.9;

y is 0.1-1.9; and

n is 30-850;

said biodegradable oxidized cellulose ester having an acid number of at least 133.

Claims 37-40 (Cancelled).